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Advancement of women

Letter dated 29 September 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a summary of the World Assembly for Women, held from 12 to 14 September 2014 and chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, Fumio Kishida (see annex).

The event was jointly hosted by the Government of Japan, the Japan Business Federation (KEIDANREN), Nikkei, Inc., and the Japan Institute of International Affairs and was supported by the Japan Center for Economic Research. Participants in the World Assembly for Women stressed the importance of promoting women's active role in the economy and discussed global issues and women's initiatives. Among the participants were three senior officials of the United Nations: the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, Helen Clark, the Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Zainab Hawa Bangura.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Motohide **Yoshikawa**
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 29 September 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Summary by the Chair based on the proposals of the participants of the World Assembly for Women, Tokyo 2014

Promoting women's active role in the economy

1. *Obtain the commitment of top management.* Clarify targets, implement action plans and increase accountability. Endorse Japan's new legislation that supports women's empowerment in the workplace. Promote change in the mindset of middle management. Train and support women and produce female role models.

2. *Implement unprecedented, drastic reform in work style.* Abandon systems of long working hours and realize more highly productive and flexible work styles. Shift from "work-life balance" to "work-life management", in which one can decide how to blend work and life on the basis of one's own will.

3. *Support and encourage women's entrepreneurship.* Lower hurdles to obtaining financing, such as loans without a personal guarantee. Throughout their education, young people should be made aware that they can choose to become entrepreneurs, so that the mindset of people can be changed earlier in their development.

4. *Support women's business activities.* Actively advance public procurement by female-led corporations. Introduce social structures that make better use of senior professionals.

5. *Enhance the expansion of measures to make work and life compatible.* Promote the utilization of home caregivers in order to provide more options to families raising children or caring for the elderly so that women can work. In this regard, cooperate with local governments to establish national standards for home caregivers and create markets. Moreover, increase the supply of foreign caregivers, for example by relaxing relevant policies and measures that will attract foreign caregivers.

6. *Realize a gender-neutral social system.* Review the tax and social security systems and realize a gender-neutral social system. Introduce such measures as income tax deductions in order to support child rearing. Moreover, introduce tax incentives for companies that encourage men to take parental leave.

Global issues and women's initiatives

1. *Address the immediate needs of women and children.* Ensure that comprehensive and effective policies and mechanisms are in place in the event of a natural disaster and other crises which may threaten human security.

2. *Invest strategically in women's empowerment.* All stakeholders, including Governments, businesses and civil society should make strategic investments in the areas of education, medicine, the economy and food in order to enhance the resilience of societies.

3. *Ensure the political leadership and participation of women.* To ensure the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and related resolutions,

high-level political leadership and commitment, consultation by the international community with women in civil society and the inclusion of the perspectives and participation of women in all stages of peacebuilding and all governmental decision-making are essential. We suggest bringing key high-level leaders together to strategize for concrete results.

4. *Strengthen the role of women in peace and security.* Document and make accessible the role that women play in peace and security and ensure that resources are available to support such efforts. End the culture of impunity for sexual violence, provide survivor-centred support in peacebuilding and create mechanisms to ensure empowerment of and support for women.

5. *Reveal and correct biases against women in existing laws, institutions and national policies.* Monitor implementation. The rational analysis, including statistical analysis, of structural impediments to gender equality will allow us to keep a spotlight on women's challenges.

6. *Empower women.* Technology is critical to the empowerment of women. Technology brings access to education, technical support for small and medium-sized businesses and offers a means for women across the globe to share best practices. To build women's confidence, we need demonstrable leadership from women, not only to provide role models, but to encourage and ensure gender equality.